

shown a positive growth in dollar terms in 1999-2000. As per the disaggregate data from Directorate of General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI & S), Calcutta, the details of exports during the period 1999-2000 and the corresponding period last year for some important developed countries are as follows:—

US Dollar Million

	1998-99	1999-2000	% Growth
U.K.	1855.40	2246.62	21.0
Germany	1852.00	1802.27	(-) 2.6
Belgium	1287.88	1380.94	7.2
Japan	1651.87	1702.91	3.1
Switzerland	319.06	376.27	17.9
United States	7199.64	8533.88	18.53
West Europe	9527.36	10415.29	9.3

Export promotion being a constant endeavor of the Government, a number of steps have been taken to further enhance the export growth which include reduction in transaction costs through decentralisation, simplification of procedures and various other measures as enumerated in the Exim Policy. Steps have also been taken to promote exports through multilateral and bilateral initiatives, identification of thrust sectors and focus regions. Special Economic Zones are being set up to further boost the exports.

Preferential trade agreement with Columbia

4146. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a preferential trade agreement has recently been entered into with Columbia, the first ever with any Latin American country to boost bilateral trade and commerce;

(b) if so, by when a strong institutional mechanism would be set up for providing strategic interventions and monitoring on a regular basis and develop action plans for establishing mutual contacts; and

(c) the area in which trade and commerce would be promoted between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The question does not arise.

Adoption of Bye-Laws by EPCs

4147. SHRI M. RAJASEKARA MURTHY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government, in the interest of export promotion, have formulated model Bye-Laws/Articles of Association for all the 21 Export Promotion Councils for open, transparent and democratic working;

(b) if so, the details of such model Bye-Laws/Articles of Association;

(c) the names of the Councils who have adopted these Bye-Laws/Articles of Association in their Extra-Ordinary General Meeting/Special Meeting;

(d) the names of the Councils who have not done so far; and

(e) the action Government propose to take against such Councils who have not adopted these Bye-Laws/Articles of Association?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH):

(a) In view of the significant changes that have taken place in the international trade environment in recent years, especially after the conclusion of the Uruguay Round and the establishment of the WTO, it was felt necessary to restructure the Export Promotion Councils (EPCs) with a view to making them more responsive to the needs of their members as well as to introduce greater professionalism for improving the quality of services being provided to their members. The Government have accordingly prescribed a set of Model Bye